

*The Church & the
World Papers*

THE MISSIONARY SEQUEL OF THE NATIONAL MISSION

FOR MY SAKE AND THE GOSPEL'S

By

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THE National Mission leads necessarily to action in the cause of Christ and of the Gospel. The soul whose life has been renewed cannot but act: it must throw itself into the work that love inspires. If God has given to anyone Repentance and Hope, He has given him thereby the character of a witness to Jesus Christ, and the power of one who shares in Christ's Commission. Such a man is eager to glorify God and to serve man: he is on fire for the cause of Christ. He has felt the coming of the Kingdom, and to that Kingdom his patriotism is devoted. And it will be the same with each congregation, with the Church, and with the nation, so far as the Mission of Repentance and Hope has had effect.

To re-inforce that enthusiasm for service, and to guide it in one of its primary channels, is the purpose of whatever special efforts are being made in the coming Lent or Eastertide.

In what sense is the work of "Foreign Missions" a primary channel of Christian enthusiasm?

The believer, for whom these suggestions are

intended, desires with all his heart to do what will please Christ, his Lord; to put in action, by keeping His commandments, the love of God that has been kindled in him. Now there are two commandments, which may justly be called primary, as addressed by Our Lord Jesus Christ to his followers. Commandments though they are, they "are not grievous," but come to us in tones of loving entreaty, and as gracious legacies of honourable trust. The first is, Love one another—the duty of Christians among themselves: the second, Be ye witnesses to Me: Go ye into all the world and make disciples—the duty of Christians together towards mankind.

In love, the Body is built up to health and strength by the service which each renders to his brother: in missionary activity, the Body, so kept in health, performs its function towards mankind. The mutual service is prior, in a true sense, to the external service; but neither can be fully carried out without the other. Our Lord Himself laid great and repeated emphasis, in His infinite goodness, on the Law of Love; and when He had thereby provided for the vitality of His Church He assigned to that Church its functions, by the great Missionary Commission. To that Commission the Apostles at once addressed themselves, and the Acts are the record of their fulfilment of it; but in their injunctions to the infant churches, they insisted far oftener on love than on missionary zeal; far more on the internal and individual duties of forbearance and kindness

than on the corporate duty of evangelisation. The chief place had still to be given to the building up of the Body, by the purity of its members and their brotherly love : this made possible the activity, which has extended, and is extending the Kingdom throughout the world.

In like manner, if the National Mission has renewed men for the fulfilment of the Law of Love, in the various forms of mutual internal service, then, every member of the Body will be capable of taking his part—and will inevitably desire to take his part—in fulfilling the sister duty, which the whole Church owes to all mankind. It has been held, therefore, indispensable that means should be taken to meet and reinforce the enthusiasm for missionary work which the Holy Spirit will have inspired in the renovated Church.

The aim of the addresses and sermons which are being prepared for in the Lent season and after, is to bring home to awakened consciences the duty of the Church as witness for Christ to the non-Christian world.

Those who deeply feel the call of the missionary duty, will make the most of these opportunities, because they desire to get their enthusiasm increased and informed. If there are any who long to serve Christ, but to whom this part of His claim upon them has not yet become clear, these ought even more to make a point of taking part because it may be that in the words of some of their fellow-servants they may hear His Voice.